

The characteristic quality of English life is continuity. If there is revolution to be made in England it is done soberly as if the nation was feeling its way so as not altogether to lose the good qualities of the old state of things when taking up with the new. This was conspicuously the case when the revolution in music which came upon the world so decisively at the beginning of the 17th century; as illustrated by the attempts at secular dramatic music made in Italy by Peri and Caccini and Monteverde and Cavalli, and in France soon afterwards by Cambert and Lulli. England was affected by these changes but it took them on slowly. Many of the finest things achieved by the English composers of the old polyphonic style came about after the revolution had begun in Italy. William Byrd one of our finest composers of the old style lived and worked til 1623 – our greatest madrigal composer, Wilbye, lived til 1638. Orlando Gibbons one of the strongest and most characteristic composers

[Blank page]

ever had lived til 1625 and John Bull til 1628. But there were premonitions of change in the air and solo songs with lute and other (?) accompaniment began to displace the madrigals which had been the delight of musical households, and people began to write instrumental music in the shape of so called 'ayres' and dance tunes and fancies which they called fantasias, and most suggestive of all the courtly people developed a great taste for Masques, which were the counterpart of the Mascarades in France if which I have told you a good deal. Masques had been popular at court for many generations. We hear of them in Henry VIII and Elizabeth's reign. The public led by the court people were very fond of the drama and the Stuarts especially were always very fond of theatricals and encouraged the stage - and the effect was great in all directions. It produced a vast number of the greatest dramatists this country ever had, such as Shakespeare, and Ben Jonson, and Beaumont Fletcher and Marlowe, Webster and Ford - and many of these wrote Masques. Shakespeare's 'As you like it' is in the form of a masque. Ben Jonson wrote the Masque of Volpone in 1605 and the gipsies in 1621 (and the Vision of Delight in... ?)

Henry Lawes must have been born just at the end of
15695

In their Masques our composers tried their hands at recitative after the manner of the Italians, and at little songs. The most famous of these Masques were Milton's Comus, which was performed at Ludlow Castle in 1634, with music by Henry Lawes, who was looked upon as England's foremost songwriter. We hear of lots of Masques being performed at the court of Charles I. There was the "Triumph of Love" at the Duke of York's Palace in Whitehall in 1635 – the music being by Henry and William Lawes - "The 'King and Queens' entertainment" was performed at Richmond in 1636, which is interesting as the first public appearance of Prince Charles aged 8, afterwards familiarly known as Charles II. In 1637 "Britannia Triumphans" was performed at Whitehall. We hear of Queen Henrietta Maria and her ladies of the court taking part in 'Luminalia'? or the 'Festival of Light' in 1638 and in 1639 we hear of 'Saturn...xxxx Spolia' and this may be observed to a close up to a crisis in the King's difficulties, for in 1642 Charles unfurled his standard at Nottingham, and the battle of Edghill was fought – and from then onwards there was not

Oliver Cromwell is said to have instituted State
Concerts

One of the reasons for this impulse in the direction of secular music was that denominational questions were so prominent in the Civil War. The Puritans feeling which impelled men to fight against the Sacerdotalism of the Church which Charles favoured was among other things unfavourable to elaborate Church Music. They suspected everything which deemed to savour of the practices

much disposition or opportunity for Masques and music; and in 1649 the King himself came to an end in front of the Banqueting Hall at Whitehall. English Composers did not take on the new style of music at all easily. Their attempts at recitative and song were strangely clumsy and the output from Charles's reign apart from Masques was very small. Of publications there were not so much as an average of one a year! And very few even of these represented the new departures. In 1638 one East published pieces for viols, and in 1648 Henry and William Lawes published some "Choice Psalms" which included lots of solo music. When things settled down after the Civil War and Cromwell took the helm music began to be much more alive; and it is important to note that public taste and composers' activities were prompted in the direction of secular music and instrumental music. In 1650 the very year after Charles's death the collection of tunes known as the English Dancing Master came out, in 1651 the Musical Banquet, in 1652 Playford's Choice Ayres and Dialogues, and a book of new lessons for the Cittern; and

of the Roman Church. The antagonism to and suspicion of that Church which endangered National liberties was simmering on all the while since the days of Elizabeth, through James and Charles's reigns. Even as early as 1641 The House of Lords appointed a Committee to consider the ordering of services in Churches. And they reported adversely on Church Music. And then the Puritan Soldiery took it in hand to enforce the decision and set to work to destroy organs and collections of Church music. They seemed to them to savour of Romanism. Choirs and Church establishments were broken up and the fine old traditions were abolished. And when Church music revived in Charles II's time it came back in quite a new guise, with a good deal of the flavor of secular theatricality about it. And meanwhile the English composers who would have written Church music had to divert their energies into secular channels.

In 1653 Lawes' Choice Ayres and Dialogues – and so it went on. In 1656 a landmark was Locke's little Consort, and another important landmark in 1659 was Simpson's Division Violist. The composer whose works belonged most essentially to the time of the commonwealth was this same Henry Lawes, who was born in ?? in 15695 – he became a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal in 1626, and wrote music to several Masques in Charles' reign; the most notable being the Music to Comus, as before mentioned. His reputation was mainly founded on his little songs – several sets of which came out in the Commonwealth time. For us they seem for the most part very clumsy. When Charles II arrived he was returned to his Court appointment, and was entrusted with the duty of providing the anthem for the Kings Coronation, which he made to the words 'Zadok the priest'. But he only survived the King's return by two years, and died in 1662. Matthew Locke was a much more capable and inventive Composer. He was born in Exeter about 1630, and was a Chorister in the Cathedral there from 1638 to 1641. The circumstances

William Lawes (p.20a) elder brother of Henry. Pupil of Coperario. Not known when born, probably about 1585. In Chichester Choir, left in 1602. Gentleman of the Chapel Royal. Joined the Cavalier Forces and was killed at the siege of Chester 1645. Philomel. Venus & Adonis.

Philomela and Procne. Daughter of Pandion King of Attica. Procne married Tereus King of the Thracians and had a son Itys. Tereus preferred Philomela and persuaded her Procne was dead, and married her. They found it out. Procne revenged herself by killing Itys and serving him up for dinner to Tereus. Tereus pursued the sisters to kill them as they besought the gods to turn them into birds. Philomela became a nightingale and went to Hades. The extraordinary interest that was taken in music during the Commonwealth. The solo songs and dialogues, the suites dance tunes, fancies the Masques and so called opera.

NB Purcell not born till 1658. Lulli's career as an opera composer had not begun.

of his coming to London are not known; but he must have become well known there before 1653; as in that year he provided the music for Shirley's Masque of Cupid and Death which was performed at the Military Ground in Lincoln Fields before the Portuguese Ambassador. It exists in MS at the British Museum and a very clumsy and infantile thing it is altogether. There seems to have been a wave of ardour for instrumental music here during the Commonwealth. Composers were trying their hands at it eagerly and most of their efforts were of the crudest description. The forms which they favoured most were 'Fancies' and Suites. The former were peculiarly and specially characteristic of the period. The composer who won most respect in connection with them was one John Jenkins, who was born in Maidstone in 1592 and lived till 1678. (see p.23)

[Blank page]